

20 OCT 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

FROM : Sayre Stevens  
Deputy Director, National Foreign  
Assessment Center

SUBJECT : Follow-Up  29-30 September 1978

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REFERENCE : Multiple addressee memo dtd 5 Oct 78  
from DDCI, same subject

1. This memorandum responds to action requested in para. 8 of referenced memorandum:

"8. Panels. Continue to develop panel criteria which addresses composition of panels and size of units handled by panels. Primary purpose is to build more objectivity in panel system; composition should be as broad as possible; number of people reviewed by panels should be larger."

"ACTION: Participants comment to O/Personnel by 11 October. O/Personnel prepare summary report and recommendations for action to DDCI by 18 October 1978."

2. The National Foreign Assessment Center has a system of boards and panels which we believe operates very well within the current framework of the Uniform Promotion System. Each office of NFAC has both a professional panel and a clerical panel. The clerical panel system is relatively new and it is too early for a meaningful evaluation of its effectiveness.

3. With regard to panels for professionals, these are composed of line supervisors (Division and Branch Chiefs) who are familiar with the performance of the individuals under review. We firmly believe that these officers are in the best position to evaluate performance. Even more important, we believe these officers are the only ones who can perform the more difficult task of assessing the potential of our employees. We recognize the need to maintain objectivity in our panel deliberations and we are aware that there are pitfalls where panel members

know personally the employees being evaluated. Even so, we believe that the benefits that accrue to the employees, the office, and the directorate because of the knowledge that supervisory personnel bring to panel deliberations far outweigh the pitfalls.

4. It is our opinion that the present system of fitness reports standing alone would not support a system in which panels were comprised of individuals not personally familiar with the performance of the employees being considered. An evaluation system that tried to achieve greater objectivity by bringing in outsiders to render comparative evaluations would require a performance reporting system much more detailed and much more specific than that which is presently in effect.

5. As indicated above, the comparative evaluation of NFAC employees is primarily done at the office level. Thus at the junior and middle-level grades (through GS-13) this system permits, for example, economists to be evaluated against other economists, scientific/technical analysts to be evaluated against their peers who are working in the same area, and so forth. We believe that in these early, developing years of the employee this is the fairest and most meaningful evaluation for all concerned. To expand the size of the group being evaluated by including other disciplines would add little to what management needs to make its personnel-related judgments at this phase in employees' development.

6. The situation changes at, and above, the GS-13 level. Here management must make critical decisions concerning the selection and development of employees to be its more senior leaders in the future. The base for comparative evaluation of these employees must be broad for these judgments. For these reasons, NFAC comparatively evaluates for potential/value and promotion all GS-14 and GS-15 employees on a directorate-wide basis. We have found this to be necessary and meaningful. We believe this system effectively serves management's need to assess employees across-the-board at the levels where it is important to do so.



*for* Sayre Stevens

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